"GOD'S MEDICINE FOR PEOPLE PROBLEMS"

I Thessalonians 5:14-15

3-25-2026



*** We must apply <u>GOD'S MEDICINE</u> to those who are spiritually ill.**

What does God prescribe?

I. GOD'S PRESCRIPTION FOR <u>BURDENSOME</u> PEOPLE (v. 14)

A. GOD PRESCRIBES <u>CONFRONTATION</u> OF THOSE WHO <u>GO ASTRAY</u>
(We must straighten out the <u>thinking</u> of those who go astray)

B. GOD PRESCRIBES <u>COMFORT</u> FOR THOSE WHO ARE <u>EASILY DISCOURAGED</u>
(We must strengthen the <u>hearts</u> of those who are easily discouraged)

C. GOD PRESCRIBES <u>SUPPORT</u> FOR THOSE WHO ARE <u>WITHOUT STRENGTH</u>
(We must support the weak <u>knees</u> of those who can't stand on their own)

D. GOD PRESCRIBES <u>PATIENCE</u> IN ALL CASES
(We must suffer long with everyone we care for)

II. GOD'S PRESCRIPTION FOR <u>TROUBLESOME</u> PEOPLE (v. 15)

A. GOD PRESCRIBES <u>WITHHOLDING EVIL</u> FROM THE EVIL-DOERS

B. GOD PRESCRIBES <u>DOING GOOD</u> FOR THE UNDESERVING

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INTRODUCTION:

Paul, after describing the attitude that God expects believers to have toward their pastor [an attitude of appreciation (v. 12), and respect (v. 13)], now describes the action believers are to have with each other.

Paul shifts from speaking about your relationship and responsibility toward your pastor, to your relationship and responsibility toward each other in our church.

ILLUS: How a doctor, nurse, or social worker must know how to handle various problems.

We are called to be spiritual physicians and spiritual workers who must know how to handle the irritable. We must know how to deal with those who "rub us the wrong way"; those who "get under your skin."

As Christians we need to learn how to help the helpless, to direct the directionless, to encourage the discouraged, to love the unlovable.

V. 14

"Brethren" = God is addressing believers in general.

While dealing with faulty members is in special measure the responsibility of the pastor, it is not confined to him. All believers must be ready to minister! (Hiebert, p. 234).

The three classes of Christians in need of help may have been the 3 groups who already had their problems addressed in this letter:

1."Unruly" = idlers (4:11-12)
2."feeble minded" = worried about death and salvation (4:14-17; 5:9-11)
3."Weak" = those who were tempted to lapse into immorality (4:2-8)

(Hendriksen, p. 136)

Three types of people needed special attention in the Thess. church; and each type needed different treatment.

Different needs must be handled in different ways.

The medicine we prescribe must meet the need or it could do more damage than good - even though we meant well.

*** We must apply GOD'S MEDICINE to those who are spiritually ill.**

What does God prescribe?

I. GOD'S PRESCRIPTION FOR BURDENSOME PEOPLE (v. 14)

A.GOD PRESCRIBES CONFRONTATION OF THOSE WHO GO ASTRAY
(We must straighten out the thinking of those who go astray)

V. 14

"Unruly" = a military term that described a soldier who neglected his duty and was out of order, out of step, and out of rank. It also described an army that was marching and advancing toward the enemy in disarray (disorderly confusion).

ILLUS: of a machine out of order
ILLUS: of marching out of step, throws others off
ILLUS: how Roman army marched perfectly. Rome conquered the world because they were organized.

One who is unruly is one who:

1) is not doing what he should do (sin of omission)

EX: not working (cp. II Thess. 3:6 - idleness)

Note: In I Th. 5:14, we are commanded to confront him. In II th. 3:6 we are to withdraw from him. Which do we do?

You do both. READ II Th. 3:14-15

2) is doing what he should not do (sin of commission)

Whenever someone does not do what they should be doing (EX: reading Bible, praying, attending church, working hard, loving family, etc.), it won't be long before they are doing what they shouldn't be doing.

How do we handle such a person?

"Warn" = is the same word as translated "admonish" in f. 12. It basically means to put into the mind, to confront the mind; to correct someone's thinking.

Thinking affects behavior.

Wrong thought patterns result in wrong patterns of behavior.

Many times we waste a lot of time trying to change someone's external

actions without dealing with the cause (the root) of sinful thinking. What a person thinks reveals what he is (his character)

To confront someone who is going astray, you need:

1. To know Bible doctrine
2. To have courage and boldness
   (confrontation is not easy)

The attitude of many is: "So what if he isn't doing right? -- That's his business, not mine."

If you are a believer, he is your business! In our church family, no one is an isolated island separated from the rest.

If you see someone going astray and you do nothing about it, you are an accomplice to the crime by default and become guilty with that person, and have bloody hands (Exek. 3:17-18).

Paul could say he was "pure from the blood of all men" (and he was referring to believers) - Acts 20:26

Paul could say this because he did not look the other way; or sweep sin under the carpet. He personally dealt with it in people's lives. This is love! He loved them enough to keep them from the wages of sin.

B. GOD PRESCRIBES COMFORT FOR THOSE WHO ARE EASILY DISCOURAGED
(We must strengthen the hearts of those who are easily discouraged)

The word translated "feeble-minded" does not refer to someone with a mental deficiency, but to someone who has a mind and heart filled with worry, fear, and discouragement (the word literally means "little-souled).

Why do people get discouraged?

1. Adverse circumstances
   (financial misfortune, physical suffering, opposition for the faith, family hardships)

2. Struggle with sin
   (a deep consciousness of their own sinfulness which causes them to despair of being able to live the Christian life - Hiebert, p. 235)

Many people seem by nature (old nature, of course) to be negative. Perhaps through parental example they learned to fear the worst. They

face each trial in life with apprehension and timidity.

What they don't need is for you to pound them over the head and say, "I can't understand how you can be this way! Don't you know the Bible says that `God has not given us the spirit of fear but of power and love and of a sound mind?'" (II Tim. 1:7)

I'm not saying this verse is not a good one for this type of person. It's excellent! It's how you say it that matters!

Don't blast him! (he needs to be cheered up, not chopped down).

The discouraged Christian does not need to be rebuked like those who are deliberately walking disorderly.

He needs to be cheered up; softly and tenderly encouraged; stimulated by caring words, well-thought-out words, to continue in the battle, to not give up, to re-focus his eyes on Christ and the promises of God!

C. GOD PRESCRIBES SUPPORT FOR THOSE WHO ARE WITHOUT STRENGTH
(We must support the weak knees of those who can't stand on their own)

It is said of Job that he was a man who "strengthened the weak hands." His words had held up "him that was falling." And he had strengthened the feeble knees (Job 4:3-4).

"Weak" = does not refer to physical weakness in context, but to moral and spiritual weakness.

"Weak" = lit. "without strength"

ILLUS: of someone who is about to be sucked into a cult

ILLUS: of someone who is about to fall off the deep end (into sexual immorality, etc.)

Weak areas are often problems of the lust of the flesh.
Examples:

1. Poor self-discipline
2. Out of control appetites
3. Sinful thought life

"Support" = lit. to "hold on firmly" or to "cling on" to someone

It means to give support to someone by putting your arms around the weak

and holding him up.

Some of us from time to time will experience low points or valleys in our walk with Christ. Sometimes we will experience knock-out blows by the evil one. Sometimes we will be at our "wits end" and will be without spiritual stamina. We will feel like we can't fight the fight of faith another round.

It is at that point that we need someone to lift us up, someone to cling on to us. We need someone who will not despise us because of our seeming helplessness.

God is <u>not</u> calling on us to condone sin!

We are never to sympathize with the sin, but with the struggling sinner.

We are not to smear the sin in their face, but we are to lift them up out of it!

Do you know what type of person will never do this? (one who refuses to help those in spiritual weakness?) ANSWER: the <u>self-righteous</u>.

How can we support (hold up) those whoa re sapped of spiritual vigor or moral muscle?

1. They must <u>confess</u> their weak areas to you (James 5:16)

2. You must keep the information confidential and <u>pray</u> for your brother or sister (James 5:16)

3. In an encouraging way, you must hold that person <u>accountable</u>. (Periodically check up on that person)

Why isn't this done in churches today? <u>PRIDE</u>

Don't write him off! (as a useless nothing, with no hope)
How big is your God?
How strong is your God?

God can infuse him with strength (Phil. 4:13)

D. GOD PRESCRIBES <u>PATIENCE</u> IN ALL CASES
(We must suffer long with everyone we care for)

Patience is how you apply the medicine. It's your attitude in putting on the needed balm.

A doctor can operate with correct tools and medicines etc., but the way he does it, and the time he is willing to put in -- that is what makes the difference.

"Patient" = to be long-fused; long-tempered; lit. to be able to put up with "much internal heat" without "blowing your tope" or "Losing you cool" with someone.

"Patient <u>toward all</u>" - would specifically include those 3 types of people just mentioned.

It would be easy to lose your patience with the unruly, feeble-minded, and weak.

But remember how patient god was (and is) with us (II Pet. 3:9; Ro. 2:4).

A pastor needs patience more than anything else (cp. II Tim. 4:2)

Patience is needed when:

1) You have "told them 1,000 times" before

2) They are back where you just lifted them out

To be a "people person," the key ingredient is patience!

But you will not have it without-

1. love (I Cor. 13:4)
2. The Spirit (Gal. 5:22)

II. GOD'S PRESCRIPTION FOR <u>TROUBLESOME</u> PEOPLE (v. 15)

A. GOD PRESCRIBES <u>WITHHOLDING EVIL</u> FROM THE EVIL-DOERS

V. 15

"See" = see to it; be on the look out; be watchful and alert that no one pays back evil in return for evil.

The combination of the second person ("you see to it") with the third person ("none renders") shows that the whole Body is responsible for each individual part of the Body.

As a church we are to see to it that none in our membership retaliates (seeks to get back at someone).

God does not want you to abstain from getting back at someone, but He wants you to keep anyone else from getting even with someone else.

We are to be the neutral person who steps in to break up the fight (EX - Guardian Angels of NYC)

All of us are to stand guard and make sure that this worldly, devilish, selfish, unloving practice of retaliation ("getting even" "paying back") does not gain entrance into our church.

Of all sinful tendencies, this one is the easiest to give into and justify. We think: "He stabbed me, I'll stab him. He gossiped about, robbed, cheated, slandered, spoke against my child . . . I will do same to him. He didn't give to me . . . I won't to him."

No doctor would fight poison with poison! Or disease with disease. That is not a cure. [NOTE: A vaccine when you are well is given so that you will build up antibodies; no one gives a vaccine to someone who has the virus already. You give an anti-biotic - the opposite of the virus.]

Jesus taught against retaliation - SEE Mt. 5:38-48

NOTE: The Sermon on the Mount is personal exhortation for individual believers and does not nullify the responsibility of govt. to see that justice is fulfilled.

I Pet. 3:9 - "Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing."

Paying back evil with evil is wrong on 3 counts:

Those who retaliate are:

1. Saying that sin justifies sin

   Your sin gives me a right to sin (one wrong deserves another)

EX: Divorce - "You committed adultery...I'm going for a divorce"

EX: Lawsuits - "You ruined my reputation (injured my character), etc. so I am going to sue you!"

EX: Cheating employer - "He doesn't pay me or treat me like he should, so I'm not going to do my best on the job."

2. Taking God's prerogatives in their own hands.

SEE Rom. 12:17-21 ("Vengeance is mine..." - quoting Deut. 32:35, 41)

3. Not practicing the Law of Love

SEE Mt. 5:43-48 "Love your enemies..."

Remember if God commands us not to "get even," even the thought or desire to get even is wrong (sinful)

B. GOD PRESCRIBES DOING GOOD FOR THE UNDESERVING

We are not merely to stop the negative (not give evil for evil) but we are to go a step further and replace it by doing the positive ("do good").

To do good to those who do evil to you means:

1) No exceptions - "ever" = always, on every occasion and circumstance.

2) Great effort - "follow" = to pursue after with great effort; to seek eagerly; to hung after (ILLUS: a hunter pursuing a deer; or a hound dog pursuing a rabbit)

3) Impartiality - saved and lost alike

CONCLUSION:

I. God's prescription for burdensome people:

A. God prescribes confrontation of those who go astray

B. God prescribes comfort for those who are easily discouraged

C. God prescribes support for those who are without strength

D. God prescribes patience for all cases

II. God's prescription for troublesome people:

A. God prescribes withholding evil from the evil doers

B. God prescribes doing good for the undeserving.

"To live above with saints we love
Oh, that will be glory;
To dwell below with saints we know,
Well, that's another story."

You <u>are</u> your brother's keeper!

Keep his best interest in mind!

Phil. 2:3-4 - "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."